crores. Therefore, the subsidy is now going entirely in favour of BPL population, while in the earlier dispensation, there was subsidy for APL also. The revision in the prices alongwith doubling of foodgrains for BPL quota will effectively transfer about 41% more resources to the poor.

In addition, different Ministries/Departments implement various schemes aimed at poverty alleviation, generation of employment, nutrition and health care etc. which contribute to enhancement of food security in the country.

(c) For providing subsidised foodgrains under TPDS, Government of India does not release subsidy directly to the State Governments except under the decentralised procurement and distribution scheme to the States of U.P., M.P. and West Bengal. Subsidy released to the Food Corporation of India (FCI) during the last three years was as follows:—

(Rs. in crores)

Year	Amount
1997-98	7500.00*
1998-99	8700.00#
1999-2000	8856.71

*Includes Rs. 28 crores to Government of West Bengal under decentralised procurement.

#Includes Rs. 54 crores to Government of West Bengal under decentralised procurement.

Variation in the prices of *Essential Commodities*

1289. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND *PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION* be pleased to state:

(a) what was the variation in the prices of essential commodities during the last year in the open market; and

(b) what action Government have taken for controlling the prices of essential commodities during the last year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) The percentage variation in the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) numbers of selected essential commodities during the last one year as on 15.7.2000 are

given below:

Commodity	Percentage variation (15.7.2000/17.7.1999)
Rice	—0.5
Wheat	5.2
Gram	19.7
Arhar	—10.5
Potato	—15.9
Onion	—47.2
Tea	—17.8
Sugar	5.5
Salt	—18.3
Vanaspati	—11.6
Groundnut Oil	2.2
Mustard Oil	—13.2

(b) The Government has taken a number of steps to control the prices and augment the availability of essential commodities in the country. Apart from certain long terms measures to increase production of essential goods, import of items having gap in their demand and supply, like pulses have been placed under OGL at zero per cent import duty. Export of onion has been placed under quantitative restriction. Some of the essential commodities like rice, wheat, palmolein, sugar and kerosene are also supplied through the outlets of public distribution system. Stringent actions are being taken against hoarders, black marketeers and others indulging in unfair trade practices under the Essential Commodities Act and Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act by the State/UT Governments.

Overdue amount of loan for Cane Development

1290. SHRI LAJPAT RAI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what was the total of overdue amount in respect of cane development loan as on 30th September, 1999;